WASHTENAW IMPRESSIONS

Records of meetings of the Washtenaw Historical Society

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STATE AND LOCAL WAR HISTORY

By Howard H. Peckham*
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War Historian of the University of Michigan

The situation in Michigan with regard to war-record collecting is discouraging, due to the fact that the State was dilatory about putting forth any effort and has evolved only a loose organization of volunteer workers. It was September, 1942, before the first step was taken, and then it was the Michigan Council of Defense which asked the Michigan Historical Commission to act as the official state agency for collecting records of Michigan's part in the war. The proposal called for a Director of Collecting in each of the 83 counties. The intention was that he should appoint what local committees he needed, cooperate with local leaders of historical, civic, and patriotic organizations, and report regularly to Lansing.

Even this plan was not put into operation until June, 1943. In that month a letter was released from the state office of Civilian Defense to the chairmen of the County Councils of Defense, calling their attention to the plan proposed ten months earlier, and asking the County Councils to appoint Directors of Collecting. A booklet entitled War Records was prepared as a guide jointly by the Office of Civilian Defense and the Michigan Historical Commission. But since there is no central director, the state organization remains headless. The quarterly Michigan History Magazine has not been used to inform or stimulate the work. Professor Donal Hamilton Haines, of the Journalism Department of the University, was appointed Director of Collecting for Washtenaw County. Professor Haines has found the organizing of the task difficult, due partly to lack of direction and partly to lack of instruction as to what to do with the material to be collected.

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*Mr. Peckham has, since this meeting, left Ann Arbor to become Director of the Indiana Historical Bureau, with headquarters at Indianapolis. His work as War Historian of the University has been taken over by Professor F. Clever Bald of the History Department.

The extremely well organized campaigns which some other states have been pushing are at the same time an indictment and an inspiration to Michigan to wake up and do more effective work on this task before it becomes too late. In most of these states the existing historical commission or state historical society immediately assumed the direction of an integrated plan that reached into every activity affected by the war. I happen to have some acquaintance with Indiana's program and I believe it to be typical of what wide-awake states are doing. In that state the impetus came from the Civilian Defense Director, who turned to the president of Indiana University for advice on keeping the records of this national emergency. This was done before Pearl Harbor. Conferences followed which involved the governor, the state historical bureau (corresponding to our commission), and the state historical society. All plans were completed for collecting war records and announced in newspapers throughout the state on April 14, 1942. To direct all this work, the State Defense Council recommended to the governor that he appoint an Indiana War History Commission. He named 41 prominent and active citizens to the commission, which gave the war work dignity and authority. The Commission set up a staff of workers at Indiana University that included three field agents to travel about the state. Further, the work was split into six divisions and a chairman appointed for each one. Each division has as many sub-divisions as needed to cover its field. Already records have been collected, reports have been written, and articles have been published. Publicity by the Commission has been effective and continuous.

Whatever is finally done about war history collecting in Michigan obviously must be done on the local level, and if Washtenaw County's part in World War II is to be adequately recorded, it is probable that the Washtenaw Historical Society will have to do it, and perhaps also publish the results. Under present arrangements, I agree with the War Records booklet that county records should stay in the county. This work should not be neglected, for certainly Washtenaw County is playing a remarkable part in the war.

I need only mention the words Willow Run to evoke thoughts of plane production, bomber training, and the social impact of the village. Then there must be considered the war's effect on the small towns and rural areas of the area. Likewise in the picture is the participation of the University in the war, an account of which is now in preparation. Perhaps you would be interested in knowing, as an example of a local program, what the University is doing about collecting material on its war activities.

During the period of national emergency, extending from the passage of the draft act in September, 1940, to Pearl Harbor, the University had functioning a Committee on National Defense, an advisory group of faculty members that kept no records. In December, 1941, this committee was superseded by the University War Board with a secretary to record all proceedings. As all war activity on campus headed up in this body, the secretary's records tell the story of the adjustment of the University to a nation at war. The first group

of soldiers brought here for special training was the Japanese language company that arrived in January, 1943. The War and Navy Departments speeded their plans for other special training programs during that winter and spring. Several military units were installed here by July 1, 1943. The war activities on campus were now so diversified that their progress was out of reach of the secretary of the War Board. In August the question was raised in Regents' meeting about appointing a University War Historian on a part-time basis who would devote himself to collecting the records of the University's war activities, write up accounts of the various special programs, and prepare for an ultimate history of the University's participation in the war in one or more volumes. I was appointed to that post at the end of August, 1943.

The work of collection has been done in several different ways:

1. Collected departmental records relating to adjustment to war, although as yet not many are non-current. University War Board records are all in this collection.
2. Created records by interviews which are then written up.
3. Surveyed faculty members for war activities.
4. Clipped newspapers for war news, and filed clipped material by departments.

As part of the War Historian's work, I have also done three other jobs:

1. Worked with the University News Service on publicity in order to inform the State about the University's war services, through the Alumni Bulletin, movie film, and news stories.
2. Started writing the war history in order to determine the adequacy of the records collected so far, and in order to obtain criticism before the narrative goes into permanent book form.
3. Acted as collecting agency for the General Library, Clements Library, and Michigan Historical Collections in securing material relating to this war wanted by each of them.

Ann Arbor, Michigan
January 19, 1945

WAR RECORDS OF UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN ALUMNI FROM WASHTENAW COUNTY

By Mrs. Lunette Hadley
Director of Alumni Catalog Office
University of Michigan

All names and figures in this paper must be understood to apply to those Alumni who have attended the University during the regular academic years, and whose home address is given as Washtenaw County. We do not claim that we have secured all the names of those in military service in the group as defined above, but we do feel we have a very large majority of them. We welcome information about any we may have missed.* It is understood that promotions in rank and changes of training and combat areas are constantly taking place. We are, however, giving facts and figures that are on record in the Alumni Catalog Office as of December 30, 1944. These records have been compiled from newspapers, letters from soldiers and from their parents, requests for changes of address, and inductee lists.

It gives me great pride to state that at the present time, in Washtenaw County, there is a total of 988 Michigan Alumni in the United States Military Service.

61 of this number are women
- 27 of the women are Michigan graduates
- 34 are non-graduates

927 of this number are men
- 537 of the men are Michigan graduates
- 390 are non-graduates

1 of the women is a Major, 26 are Lieutenants, 6 are Ensigns, and the remainder in various lower ranks

25 of the women are known to be overseas

Of the men:

280	are graduates of the	Literary College
63	"	Engineering College
8	"	College of Architecture
104	"	Medical School
25	"	Law School
4	"	School of Pharmacy
9	"	School of Dentistry
12	"	School of Education
15	"	School of Business Administration
16	"	School of Forestry & Conservation
9	"	School of Public Health
7	"	School of Music
91	"	Graduate School

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*Following the report of this meeting in the Ann Arbor News, Mr. John H. Morrison of Dexter wrote us a letter describing the clipping he has been doing of Ann Arbor News and Dexter Leader records of Washtenaw in the War, now filling 6 scrapbooks, as well as 24 scrapbooks of other Washtenaw County items. He gives total figures for the County (not restricted to University Alumni) as follows: 109 dead, 95 wounded, 53 missing, 38 prisoners of war. Mr. Morrison is nightwatchman in a war plant. We need equally devoted persons to clip from the other six County papers.

(The total number of degrees listed above is larger than the figure given earlier for men and women graduates for the reason that many graduates have taken more than one degree.)

Of the 927 men in service:

4 are Commanders
8 are Lieutenant Commanders
2 are Colonels
14 are Lieutenant Colonels
47 are Majors
93 are Captains
209 are Lieutenants (including Jr. and Sr. and 1st and 2nd)
44 are Ensigns
and the remainder in lower ranks and various specialized training programs.
9 men from Washtenaw County have been honorably discharged for disabilities.
2 men were at Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.
258 men are known to be overseas or on sea duty.
12 are prisoners of war in various belligerent countries.
29 have been awarded distinguished medals, such as Purple Heart, Silver and Bronze stars, Oak Leaf Clusters, Air Medals, Distinguished Flying Cross, Certificates of Merit, Medals for Action in Asiatic, Pacific, African, and Middle East Theaters of War.

There are many of our Alumni in service from Washtenaw County who have been in circumstances which have enabled them to contribute outstanding services to the war effort. We hesitate to mention names as we are fully aware that each and every man and woman in service is displaying distinguished conduct and extraordinary courage in their every line of duty, and are true and fitting symbols of a wartime America.

Twenty-three University of Michigan Alumni from Washtenaw County are known to have been killed in action or died while in service. Nine of these are graduates, and 14 are non-graduates. A list of these honored names follows this paper. The University presents to the next of kin of every deceased soldier a beautiful Scroll of Honor bearing this inscription:

> The University of Michigan has placed this name upon the Roll of those Alumni who, in the fine tradition of loyalty and self sacrifice established by former generations, served their country in time of peril and have given their lives in defense of our National Liberties. It will forever be held in Honor. To the family and friends who have suffered bereavement, the Regents and Faculty of the University offer their deepest sympathy.

The name of the soldier is engraved at the top of the Scroll, and at the bottom is shown the signatures of President Ruthven and Secretary Shirley Smith, together with the seal of the University and the name of the next of kin.

It may be interesting to add the fact that 292 present and past members of the faculty are known to be in military service (101 members of the present faculty); 166 of this number are Michigan Alumni.

May we say that the entire citizenry of Washtenaw County bears tribute to these valiant citizens of ours who are giving the last full measure of devotion, that Freedom shall not perish from the earth.

Gold Star List
of Washtenaw County University of Michigan Alumni
as of December 30, 1944

Robert Charles Allmendinger, 1936-39, Second Lieutenant in the U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in the crash of a Liberator Bomber at Gowan Field, Boise, Idaho, February 26, 1944.

Earl David Barnard, 1936-39, Petty Officer in the U. S. Navy. Official notice of death received March 26, 1943, following failure to return from routine patrol flight from the U. S. Naval Air Station at Pensacola, Florida, on June 5, 1942.

Keith Orland Bartlett, 1936-38, Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in action somewhere in the European Area, March 31, 1943.

Robert Irvin Bates, 1942-43, Second Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in action near Cheng Kiang, China, Sept.19, 1944.

Wilmer Seeley Becker, 1940, Second Lieutenant, U. S. Army, died in the vicinity of St. Lo, France, of wounds received in action, August 8, 1944.

George Ham Cannon, BSE(ME) 1938, First Lieutenant in the U. S. Marine Corps, was the first University of Michigan man from Washtenaw County or perhaps from any part of the country to die in America's defense. Lieutenant Cannon was killed in action on Midway Island in North Pacific Ocean on December 7, 1941.

William Kirby Cook, AB 1941, Second Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in action north of Rome, Italy, February 21, 1944.

Alvis Roland Crabb, 1942-43, Corporal, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in a plane crash at Casablanca on August 26, 1944.

Alan Francis Crump, 1939-40, First Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in action over England, November 6, 1944.

Reimar Frederic Diekhoff, 1919-21, AB 1923, Apprentice Seaman, U. S. Naval Reserves, died in the United States Naval Hospital at Corpus Christi, Texas, April 7, 1943.

Paul Savage Durfee, AB 1940, 1940-42, Lieutenant, U. S. Navy, was killed in action in the South Pacific Area, July 13, 1943.

Gordon Frederic Fischer, AM 1936, MD 1942, Captain, U. S. Army, was killed in action somewhere in Belgium, September 16, 1944.

Richard Corbin Fuller, AB 1926, AM 1930, JD 1934, Lieutenant (jg) U. S. Naval Reserve, died at the United States Naval Hospital at Brooklyn, New York, October 8, 1944.

Robert Ferdinand Hochrein, 1941-42, Second Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in action over Luliang, China, Sept. 28, 1944.

Robert Best Malcolm, BSF 1941, Private, U. S. Army Air Forces, officially listed as missing in action in the Philippines since October, 1941; officially declared dead as of July 1, 1944.

Herbert W. Morris, 1941-43, Flight Officer, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in action somewhere in France, July 17, 1944.

Henry John Peterson, 1941-43, Aviation Cadet, U. S. Navy, was killed in an airplane crash at Utica, Michigan, August 20, 1943.

William Arnold Prentice, 1938-41, First Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Forces, reported missing after an American bombing raid on Lille, France, December 9, 1942; later officially listed by the War Department as killed in action.

William Patterson Reid, ABLS 1935, AMLS 1939, Staff Sergeant, U. S. Army Air Forces, was lost in the sinking of a troop ship in the Atlantic, November 27, 1943.

John Harper Seeley, AB 1938, 1938-39, Lieutenant, U. S. Navy, died of wounds received in action in the Pacific War Area. (Date of death not yet ascertained.)

Robert William Stanton, 1938-41, Second Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in action over Frankfurt, Germany, Jan.19,1944.

Marvin Reid Taylor, 1936-41, Second Lieutenant, U. S. Army Air Forces, was killed in an airplane collision at Greenville, Mississippi, June 5, 1942.

George Goode Wolcott, 1937-39, BSF 1942, U. S. Naval Reserve, was killed on the U.S.S. McKean, when torpedoed by enemy action.

Ann Arbor, Michigan
January 19, 1945